

# ANCS+ at San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

## A Progress Report

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**I**n 1996, San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (SAFR) was a test site for the new Automated National Cataloging System (ANCS+) designed by software company Re:discovery for Windows, Inc. Staff from the Museum Management Program spent a week installing and demonstrating the new program and training users. The SAFR Collections Management Department and the Historic Documents Department (HDD) then began an ongoing process of testing and implementing the program.

ANCS+ has been a boon for tracking collection activity. The museum collection at SAFR is a very active one. Unlike many NPS areas, SAFR operates much like a typical history museum, rather than a historic site with a more-or-less static collection. In a typical year, 100-150 accessions are recorded (59 have already been recorded in the first three months of FY2000). Both incoming and outgoing loans are routine transactions. With the expanded de-accessioning authorities resulting from the 1996 amendment to the Museum Properties Act of 1955, the park is actively de-accessioning out-of-scope items.

The new functionality in ANCS+ greatly aids the registrar, Judy Hitzeman, in tracking and updating collection activity. Location tracking is proving to be especially useful, as items move on and off exhibit or loan. Having the system on a local area network permits other park staff to check on the status of items without having to go through the registrar. In addition, the system facilitates the collection of accurate accession information and data entry at the time of acquisition reduces staff time spent on recording accession information.

Maintaining the program on a network requires that strict procedures be written and fol-

lowed to avoid confusion and erroneous or inconsistent entries. SAFR staff meet once a month to discuss problems, pitfalls, and discoveries that help make the program more useful for all.

HDD staff found the test-version of the Archives Module installed in 1996 promising, but rudimentary. In December 1996, the supervisory archivist, Mary Jo Pugh, attended a meeting in Washington with other NPS archivists and David Edwards, the president of Re:discovery for Windows, Inc., to identify additional functions needed to improve its usefulness as a tool for professional archival practices. SAFR archivists Taylor Horton, Erica Toland, and this author spent over a year testing the module and requesting modifications. In the fall of 1997, David Edwards spent two days with the staff discussing the Archives Discipline Screen (ADS), the implementation of the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) format, and planning conversion of legacy data from dBase.

One of the park's goals is to have a single program to manage all local collection management activities. The combination of the Collections Management Module and the Archives Module presented the possibility of accomplishing this goal. A fundamental change to the program was the addition of the ADS in the Collections Management Module. Completing this screen and the basic registration and cataloging screens creates a complete collection level record. This record can be sent to the Archives Module, a hierarchically-arranged set of screens that parallel the structure of archival collections. Fields were selected to match MARC tags compatible with online bibliographic networks, such as the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN). Content of the fields will be formatted to meet the standard in the style manual "Archives, Personal Papers, and

Manuscripts" (APPM) in order for the data to be accepted by RLIN and other networks.

HDD staff has not yet realized their goal of having a single program to manage all aspects of archival collections. For example, the program does not manage backlogs sufficiently. Photo archivist Taylor Horton has devised an Access database to track unprocessed collections. As the database is used and refined, staff may eventually request custom programming from Re:Discovery to incorporate this necessary feature for archives management into ANCS+.

Another goal is to streamline access to archival collections. Currently there is a combination of handwritten and typewritten card catalogs, accession lists, and typed and dBase-generated finding aids. Providing access to all the holdings currently requires extensive mediation to guide researchers through this complex body of finding aids.

Implementation of the public search function in the Collections Management and Archives modules for use by all park staff and the public is one of the next major goals. Issues of levels of access and selection of fields are being discussed.

A major objective is to complete a retrospective conversion of all pre-automation and dBase legacy data and integrate it with ANCS legacy data in the new ANCS+ program that was released in 1998. Staff is standardizing the data content to meet national standards so it can be exported to the Internet through RLIN <<http://www.rlg.org/rlin.html>>, the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) <<http://lcweb.loc.gov/coll/nucmc>>

and the Online Archive of California (OAC) <<http://www.oac.cdlib.org>>, though the export feature has not yet been tried. There are a number of reasons for exporting data: to send it to online bibliographic networks in the national standard MARC; to export finding aids to the Internet coded in SGML to make our collections accessible to a world-wide audience; to provide a structure for linking digital images of documents to cataloging records and finding aids; and to provide integrated access to all park resources in the archival, museum, and library collections.

Outside the NPS, developments for providing access to archival finding aids have paralleled the park's efforts with ANCS+. A new national standard for formatting finding aids, Encoded Archival Description (EAD) uses Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML) to markup finding aids. The OAC has facilitated the debut of some of SAFR's finding aids on Internet. These fully searchable finding aids can be accessed through a "hot link" on RLIN records or on the OAC site under San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

Implementation of the ANCS+ archives module by the HDD staff continues to be time-intensive: creating an internal procedures manual that defines use of the fields including content and formatting; working on the park lexicon with library staff; providing input on the forthcoming Archives Module User Manual; and meeting regularly with the park's registrar to work out issues of implementation.

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## ***Historical Research in the National Park Service***

Every year, *CRM* publishes the current list of historical research in the National Park Service. This year's list will be included only with the online edition of this issue of *CRM*. Over the years, the list of current and ongoing research has increased in length and rather than edit the list down to more manageable proportions necessary for print, we have decided to publish the full list online. You can view this list at <<http://www.cr.nps.gov/crm>>. Any questions concerning the list of historical research should be directed to Harry\_Butowsky@nps.gov or Harry Butowsky at 202-343-8155. Further information concerning the History Program of the National Park Service can be found at <<http://www.cr.nps.gov/history>>.